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A MEMOIR OF GENERAL HENRY MILLER.

BY HIS GRANDSON, HENRY MILLER WATTS.

Henry Miller was born 13th February, 1751, in Manor township, Lancaster County. He was the youngest son of John Miller, who early purchased a tract of land within the limits of the manor of Conestoga, on a part of which he subsequently laid out a town-plot, and called it Millersburg (now Millersville). The ancestral home is still standing, a fair specimen of the era of colonial building. Young Miller received his education in the schools at Lancaster. Selecting the law for his profession, he first entered the office of Collinson Reed, Esq., of Reading, in 1769, and at a later date that of Samuel Johnston, Esq., Prothonotary of York County, under whose instructions he completed his studies and was admitted to practice. Among the prominent families then residing in Lancaster was that of Joseph Rose, Esq., a native of Ireland, and a graduate of Dublin University. He was the father of several daughters, who became the mothers of well-known families of the Commonwealth. One of these was Ursula Rose, whose beauty and gracefulness are still preserved in a portrait painted by Benjamin West, who was then an inmate of her father's house. With her, prior to his reaching the age of maturity, Henry Miller, on 26th June, 1770, was united in marriage, whereupon the young couple removed to York. In 1772 his qualifications for a useful life were recognized by his appointment as collector of excise for the county of York, and this office he acceptably filled during the ensuing two years.

Throughout the exciting period which preceded the breaking out of the war for independence, Henry Miller was an ardent advocate for the claims of the Colonies, and

when the news of the skirmish at Concord reached York, he was one of the first to offer his services in the defence of their rights. Under the resolution of Congress, 14th June, 1775, a company of riflemen was recruited by Captain Michael Doudle, principally from the neighborhood of Sam Getty's tavern (now Gettysburg) and in York, of which Henry Miller was chosen the senior lieutenant. This company became attached to the battalion of riflemen commanded by Colonel William Thompson, which received the first commissions issued by Congress, and took rank over other regiments. The battalion was composed of six companies from Pennsylvania, two from Maryland, and two from Virginia. To Lieutenant Miller's company also belongs the honor of being the first to arrive at Cambridge from any point south of Long Island and west of the Hudson River. On 1st July, 1775, the day on which the company started for the camp at Cambridge, the Committee of York County wrote to the delegates in Congress from Pennsylvania: . . . "The officers we take the liberty to commend to you are Capt. Michael Doudle, Lieutenants Henry Miller, John Dill and James Matson. They are men whose courage we have the highest opinion of. The company including officers and men are beyond the number fixed for this county, and as Gen. Gates thought it improper to discharge any, we have sent them all. We hope no alteration will be made in the officers. The Captain has behaved very well on this occasion, and has done all in his power, by advancing money, &c., to forward the important common cause. Mr. Miller is known to some of you gentlemen. They all have wives and families, and are entitled to the warmest thanks of their country." By 8th July the company reached Bethlehem, and after a short halt resumed their march. We next hear of them passing through New Windsor, on the Hudson, and finally of their arrival at Cambridge early in the afternoon of July 25. The day following they were ordered to the front, where they did picket duty and assisted in the trenches at Ploughed Field.

Of the first action in which the company participated,

29th July, we have the following account: "We were informed by our sentries at the foot of Bunker's Hill, that the enemy had cut down several large trees, and were busy all night in throwing up a line and abattis in front of it. In the evening orders were given to the York County Rifle Company to march down to an advanced post, on Charlestown Neck, to endeavor to surround the enemy's advanced guard, and bring off some prisoners, from whom we expected to learn the enemy's design in throwing up the abattis in the Neck. The rifle company divided, and executed their plan in the following manner: Capt. Doudle, with thirty men filed off to the right of Bunker's Hill, and, creeping on their hands and knees, got into the rear of the enemies sentries without being discovered. The other division under Lieut. Miller, were equally successful in getting behind the sentries on the left, and were within a few yards of joining the division on the right, when a party of regulars came down the hill to relieve their guard, and crossed our riflemen before they saw them, and immediately fired. The riflemen returned the salute, killed several, and brought off two prisoners and their muskets, with the loss of Corporal Cruise,¹ who is supposed to be killed as he had not been heard of since the affair."² A few days later Captain Doudle resigned, and Lieutenant Miller was promoted to the command of the company, and participated with it in the siege of Boston. After evacuating Boston, General Howe sailed for Halifax. On June 11 he sailed for New York, arriving at Sandy Hook the 29th, and took possession of Staten Island 2d July. Here, on August 1, he was joined by Sir Henry Clinton, from Charleston, and his brother, Lord Howe, with a fleet and large land forces from England, whereupon preparations were commenced for the capture of New York and the country along the Hudson.

¹ Walter Cruise was taken prisoner, and not exchanged for seventeen months. He was subsequently promoted to captain in the Sixth Pennsylvania Regiment of the Line.—Ed.

² Paul Lunt's Diary, May–December, 1775, p. 9. Edited by S. A. Greene, M.D.

In the mean time the rifle battalion to which Captain Miller was attached had been re-enlisted, and as the First Regiment of the Pennsylvania Line in the Continental service, commanded by Colonel Edward Hand, began its new term of service in the camp on Long Island. Of the part taken in the movements which followed, by Captain Miller and his company, we quote from a letter of Lieutenant-Colonel Chambers, of his regiment, to his wife, under date of 3d September, 1776: "On the morning of the 22d August there were nine thousand British troops on New Utrecht plains. The guard alarmed our small camp, and we assembled at the flagstaff. We marched our forces to watch the enemy. . . . When in sight of Flatbush, we discovered the enemy, but not the main body. On perceiving us, they retreated down the road perhaps a mile. A party of our people, commanded by Captain Miller, followed them close with a design to decoy a portion of them to follow him, whilst the rest kept in the edge of the woods alongside of Capt. Miller. But they thought better of the matter, & would not come after him, though he went within two hundred yards. There they stood for a long time, & then Captain Miller turned off to us." . . . In his account of the retreat, General Hand writes: "My regiment was posted in a redoubt on the left, & in the lines on the left of the great road below Brooklyn Church. Captain Henry Miller commanded in the redoubt." Writing to his wife, Captain Miller states: "Today (August 4) my company was reviewed by General Washington, but owing to a heavy cannonade up the river his stay was very short." Again, on the 31st of the same month: "As our regiments were sent only as an advance guard to watch the movements of the enemy and not for the purpose of making a stand, where they did, and as they were brought into action by the great spirit which prevailed among the Pennsylvania, Maryland and lower country troops, the result of the battle could not be properly called a defeat. . . . We forced the enemy to retreat three different times from their advanced posts, and their loss was greater than our own. . . . The retreat was conducted in

such a manner, as would do honor to the most experienced Generals and army in the world: for it entirely disconcerted the designs of the enemy to surround us. I had the honor to be in the rear guard, the Sun was up before I left the Island. Governor's Island was given up yesterday. We shall leave New York in a few days, for this place is too advantageously situated for the enemy, and the possession of it will not afford them an easy access to the back country."

A contemporary writer states this additional fact: "Captain Miller in this retreat, was the last man to enter the boats, and that, when they pushed off and were supposed to be out of danger, the fog of the morning still overhanging them, he stood up, hat in hand, and gave three hearty cheers. This brought down on them a volley of musketry that nearly swamped their boats."

(To be continued.)